

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 4381

LONDON FOR SEITZ

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, GH
SUBJ: PRESSURE ON ACHEAMPONG INCREASES--DOCTORS GO ON STRIKE,
LAWYERS MAY JOIN THEM

1. MEDICAL DOCTORS WORKING IN GOVERNMENT-OWNED HOSPITALS
IN CAPE COAST, ACCRA AND PRESUMABLY ELSEWHERE HAVE GONE
ON A STRIKE CALLED BY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION TO EXPRESS
SUPPORT FOR GHANAIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND HAVE
REPORTEDLY BEEN JOINED BY SOME DOCTORS WORKING IN PRIVATE
PRACTICE. WHILE DOCTORS WILL CONTINUE TO TREAT EMERGENCY
CASES, THEY REPORTEDLY WILL NOT GO BACK TO WORK UNTIL GOG
REOPENS UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES CLOSED MAY 14 AND STUDENTS
HAVE RETURNED TO CLASSES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MAINTENANCE
WORKERS EMPLOYED BY MINISTRY OF HEALTH HAVE ALSO WALKED
OUT IN SUPPORT OF DOCTORS' ACTION.

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2. WE ALSO THINK THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT GHANA
BAR ASSOCIATION WILL ANNOUNCE A LAWYERS' BOYCOTT OF
GHANAIAN CIVIL, SPECIAL AND MILITARY COURTS IN
NEAR FUTURE. HOWEVER, AS OF JUNE 8 BAR ASSOCIATION
HAD NOT ANNOUNCED THIS STEP.

3. COMMENT: MANY IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF GHANAIAN

SOCIETY NOW SEEM THOROUGHLY DISENCHANTED WITH ACHEAMPONG'S GOVERNMENT. THE LIST IS EXTENSIVE: STUDENTS, DOCTORS, LAWYERS, MANY MILITARY OFFICERS, MARKET WOMEN AND TRADERS HURT BY UNREALISTIC PRICE CEILINGS, MORE THAN A NEW SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS, AND MANY ORDINARY CITIZENS TRYING TO MAKE ENDS MEET IN A TIME OF RAGING INFLATION AND FOOD SHORTAGES. INDEED, ASIDE FROM MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME MILITARY AND NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCILS AND THEIR COURTIER, IT IS HARD TO NAME ANYONE WHO ACTIVELY SUPPORTS THE PRESENT REGIME. ACTION BY DOCTORS WILL GREATLY INTENSIFY PRESSURES ON ALREADY SHAKEN ACHEAMPONG. GOG IS NOW FRANTICALLY TRYING TO IMPORT MORE FOOD, BOTH FROM DONOR COUNTRIES AND THROUGH COMMERCIAL PURCHASES, AND HAS FINALLY INCREASED HEAD-LOAD PRICE PAID TO COCOA FARMERS. BUT WHETHER OR NOT THESE AND OTHER EFFORTS IT MAY MAKE TO IMPROVE SITUATION WILL HAVE THEIR EFFECT SOON ENOUGH TO SAVE REGIME IS DOUBTFUL. SMITH

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